



Edmund Rice Education Australia Flexible Learning Centre Network

Including the Excluded - Paper 1
2008 Term 3

Enrolment data across the Network as at 19.09.08

Year level	Male	Female	Total
Year 8	33	10	43
Year 9	50	27	77
Year 10	97	51	148
Year 11	51	60	111
Year 12	20	23	43
Totals	251	171	422 (406 FTE)

Other information:

Indigenous Young People	63	42	105
Young People in care			13
Young Parents			20
Young People verified with a disability			20

Referral and Transition information:

Total no of referrals received by end Term 3	1094
No. of young people who have transitioned by end Term 3 2008	128
• Apprenticeship/Employment	21
• Other secondary schools	22
• Other engagement programs	15
• Further education/TAFE	8
• Detention	2
• Parenting	2

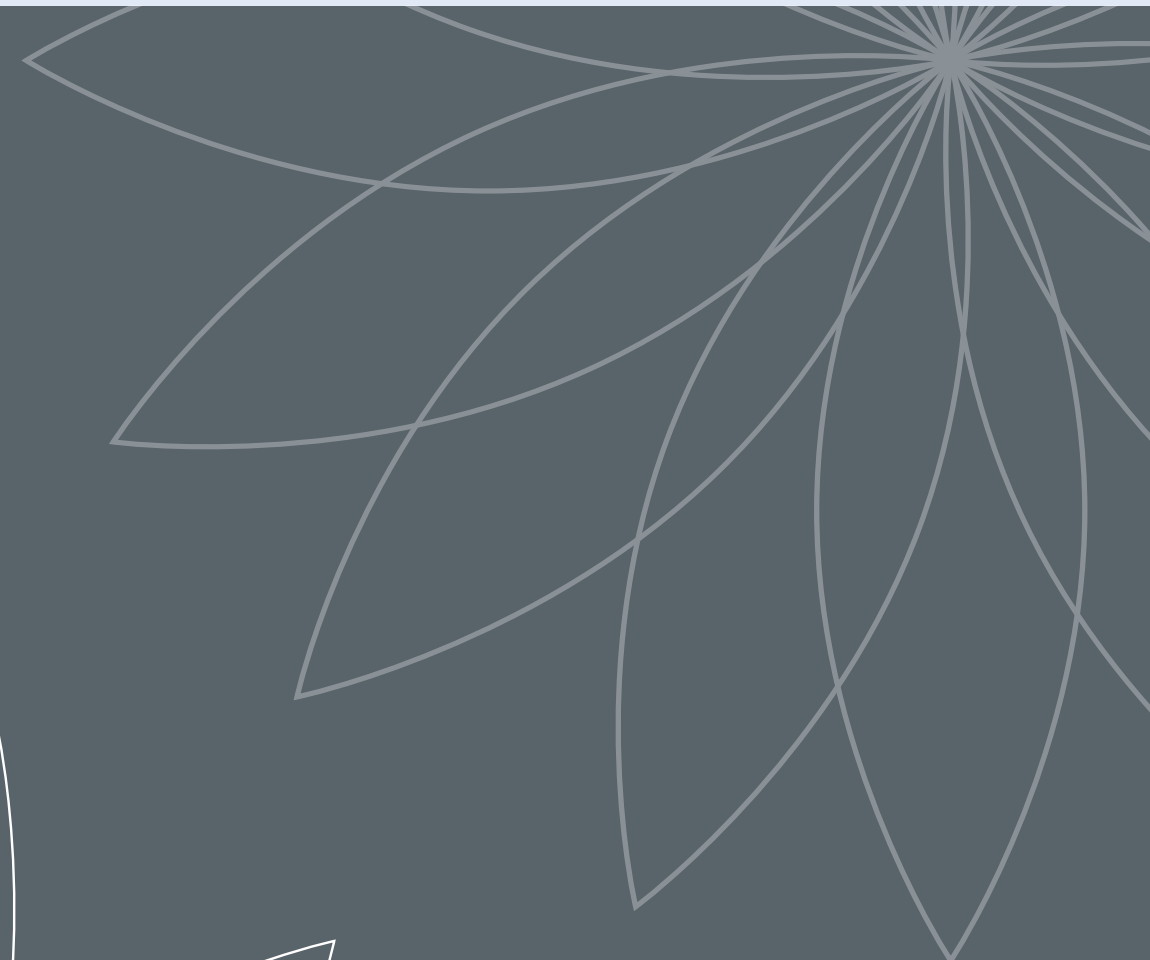
While total enrolments include 406 full time equivalents a larger number of young people are supported through-out the year. These include:

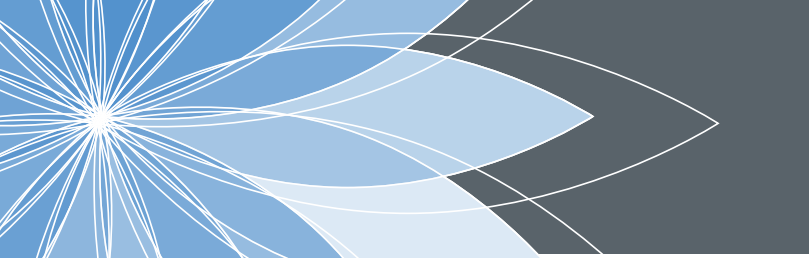
- Young people who attend part-time (due to work or family commitments)
- Young people who have transitioned during the year
- Young people who do not meet current criteria within state and national census data.

In all schools the demand for placement exceeds capacity.
(See table above)

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Central to the development and work of the Edmund Rice Education Australia Flexible Learning Centre Network (EREA FLCN) is the provision of a response to the Christian Brothers Congregation to the signs of the times, that is, to be active in creating social and learning environments which enable the emancipation of young people who have been disenfranchised from education and social connection. The EREA FLC Network has emerged by responding to invitation from communities seeking opportunities for disengaged young people. The response begins a dialogue with community and can culminate in partnerships (e.g. State Education, City Councils, Youth Agencies) that combine to provide young people with a place and an opportunity to re-engage in a suitable, flexible learning environment.

The Young People:

The young people represent a diverse population of indigenous and non-indigenous males and females of secondary school age. The young people who attend FLCs have typically experienced one or more significant and complex educational, social, developmental, psychological, health, legal or familial situations which demand unique responses. Such interventions are embedded within an educational framework but also typically involve medical, multidisciplinary, legal and/or social support personnel and systems.

Partnerships:

The EREA FLC Network currently has a range of significant partnerships and collaborations which contribute to the sustainability and practice of the schools. Some of these include:

- Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA)
 - Staff secondments, EQ facilities support, Triannual Service Agreement
- Department of Housing, Community Renewal;
 - Establishment funds for outreach programs
- Brisbane City Council - Staff secondments
- NGO Youth Agencies - United Synergies

The Practice:

Teaching and learning is characterised by small class sizes, a flexible curriculum that draws on individual interest and needs and a democratic pedagogical approach that encourages

learner empowerment and autonomy. The philosophy of the EREA FLCN has a clear commitment to social justice and stands in solidarity with disenfranchised people of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds. The philosophy also has a practical focus which is based in the adoption of common ground principles of Respect, Honesty, Safe and Legal and Participation. The principles establish a "common ground" among staff, young people and parents, a collective forum, where the means to resolve conflict, negotiate learning, recognise rights, responsibilities and consequences are modelled and explored, both within the group and individually.

The EREA FLC approach is centred in:

- Operation by common ground principles
- Emphasis on staff/young people relationships
- Flexible pedagogy focused on individual young people's needs
- Relevant curriculum linked to State and National curriculum frameworks and nationally accredited vocational education and training courses.

Places of community and social inclusion:

A key feature of Flexible Learning Centres is the place they play in the wider community as sites of social safety. As FLCs are located in urban and rural areas of very low socio-economic status these schools become important physical and social places for wider community engagement. Over time the sites become a focal point for communities to gather and develop a sense of self leading to a greater level of participation in the local, state and national political agenda. In short FLC sites offer a place for participation and inclusion to flourish.

The Network:

The EREA FLCN is currently comprised of the EREA FLC Network team, five flexible learning centres and seven outreach programs.

- Network Team (Principal, Business Manager, Learning Choices Manager, Network Support Manager, Justice

and Formation Manager, Workforce Support and Child Protection Manager, Administrative Officer, 5 FLC Coordinators + Network Research + Registered Training Organisation)

- Network Positions: Adventure Based Program Coordinator (2009)
- Centre Education Programme (Logan City)
 - Ipswich,
 - Crestmead/Marsden and
 - Beaudesert/Jimboomba Outreach
- Albert Park FLC (Brisbane CBD)
- Deception Bay FLC
 - Caboolture Outreach
- Noosa FLC
 - Gympie Outreach
- Townsville FLC
 - Upper Ross and
 - Mt Isa Outreach.

Workforce:

Systemic workforce development and practices across the network are supported to ensure ongoing professional development, reflective practice (individual and whole school) and democratic participation in review and planning. The Network currently employs up to 100 staff including teachers, multimedia youth workers, youth workers, education support workers, chaplains, social workers, speech language pathologist, psychologist, sessional workers (e.g. music, mechanics, art) and administrative support workers.

Future Options:

As of June 2008 the EREA FLCN through the EREA Board has been asked to develop appropriate national responses to community invitations for the provision of education and social inclusion services to those young people who have or are at serious risk of disengaging from mainstream structures.

Currently early discussions and community invitations have begun in the Northern Territory, predominantly in Darwin and Alice Springs and in Western Australia.

Within Queensland the following initiatives are in various stages of development:

- A part-time lead teacher role to investigate pathways to extend service provision within the Ipswich outreach program. (early 2009)
- Extend current service provision within the Gympie

outreach program to incorporate the DETA "Back on Track" program increasing enrolment to 30 young people and building a permanent facility. (mid-2009)

- A new outreach service in the Burdekin region is being investigated with DETA
- A Local Schools Working Together Partnership proposal in the Logan area has been submitted with DETA
- An initial paper is to be researched in partnership with Life Without Barriers exploring educational pathways for young people in care in the Logan area.

Research:

Developing opportunities for research through partnerships with universities, organisations and the staff and young people of the EREA FLC Network is an ongoing priority. The underlying rationale of this commitment includes:

- the complexity of our work with young people
- the scarcity of research based practice and evaluation at a national level
- the need for the development of relevant theoretical frameworks based on professional experience, reflective practice and a growing understanding of the complex needs of the disengaged young people whom we support as they make life and learning choices.

Currently the EREA FLC Network is undertaking three Australian Research Council (ARC) funded research projects. These include:

- Re-engaging disadvantaged youth through science (with James Cook University)
- Developing a values approach to school renewal (Griffith University)
- Sustainable Selves: A new assessment model for marginalised secondary students (Queensland University of Technology)

